

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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S E C R E T SANTIAGO 5619

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CI

SUBJ: REACTION OF CARDINAL SILVA -- HUMAN RIGHTS, ETC.

1. I LUNCHEDE SEPT 13 WITH CARDINAL SILVA AND SEVERAL OF HIS CLOSEST ASSOCIATES. CONVERSATION COVERED RANGE OF QUESTIONS RELATING TO GOVERNMENT'S CONDUCT AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM.

2. PRINCIPAL POINTS MADE BY CARDINAL WERE AS FOLLOWS:

A. PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S SEPT 11 ANNIVERSARY SPEECH WAS AMBIGUOUS, IN THAT IT WAS NOT CLEAR HOW ABOLITION OF STATE OF WAR WOULD AFFECT PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS FOR DETAINEES, NOR WAS IT CLEAR WHETHER AND WHEN DETAINEES WOULD ACTUALLY BE RELEASED. NEVERTHELESS, SPEECH WAS A GOOD FIRST STEP, AND CARDINAL APPROVED IT ON THAT BASIS.

B. CARDINAL INTENDS TO SEND A LETTER TO PINOCHET PRESSING HIM ON FOREGOING POINTS AND WILL REITERATE HIS VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS DURING HIS SERMON AT NATIONAL DAY TE DEUM ON SEPT 18.

C. CARDINAL HAS IMPRESSION THAT IN LAST FEW DAYS RIGOROUS SECURITY PROCEDURES HAVE MODERATED SOMEWHAT AND HOPES THAT LONG-TERM TREND TOWARD MODERATION WILL

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CONTINUE.

D. CARDINAL AND HIS ASSOCIATES WELCOME JUNTA'S DECISION TO RAISE WAGES REGULARLY BY AMOUNT EQUIVALENT TO COST OF LIVING INCREASE. THEY FEEL THAT WITH END OF WINTER HERE, WORST RIGORS OF AUSTERITY HAVE PASSED AND SITUATION BEGINNING TO IMPROVE.

E. ON ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL ISSUE, CARDINAL WANTS TO BE SURE THAT PRIESTS DESIGNATED BY HOLY CROSS CONGREGATION TO ADMINISTER AND TEACH IN SCHOOL ARE NON-CONTROVERSIAL -- I.E., ACCEPTABLE TO GOVERNMENT. AT SAME TIME, CARDINAL'S DISTASTE FOR INSENSITIVE TACTICS PURSUED BY EDUCATION MINISTER CASTRO WAS OBVIOUS.

F. CARDINAL AND FATHER POBLETE REVERTED TO THEIR OLD ADVOCACY OF LOCAL CARITAS FOOD FOR WORK PROJECT, FOR WHICH THEY WOULD LIKE SUBSTANTIAL USG AID.

COMMENT: OUR AID MISSION HAS FOUND DIFFICULTIES WITH THIS PROPOSAL, WHICH I HAVE ASKED CHURCHMEN TO REVIEW WITH NEW AID DIRECTOR VAN DYKE.

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